

**City of Chula Vista  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Minutes**

Thursday - 6:30 p.m.  
Ken Lee Building

October 16, 2008  
430 F Street

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Meeting called to order by Chair Garza at 6:30 p.m.

Staff Present: Buck Martin, Director of Recreation/Nature Center  
Jack Griffin, Director of Public Works  
Ed Hall, Assistant Director of Recreation/Nature Center  
Matt Little, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Brian Cox, Principal Recreation Manager  
Tom Class, Parks Operations Manager  
Tim Farmer, Recreation Supervisor II  
Ted Nelson, Recreation Specialist

Guests: Mark Twohly, Chula Vista Resident  
Fernando Idiaquez, Chula Vista Resident  
Ivan Loebbs, Chula Vista Resident

**1. Roll Call/Motion to Excuse**

Members Present: Commissioner Scott, Commissioner Vogel, Commissioner Rios, Commissioner Searles, Commissioner Garza  
Members Absent: Commissioner Cien-Mayer, Chambers

**MSC (Rios/Searles)** to excuse Commissioners Cien-Mayer & Chambers from tonight's meeting

**2. a. Approval of Minutes - July 17, 2008 – Move to next meeting**

**b. Approval of Leave-of-Absence for Commissioner Scott (Buck Martin)**

**MSC:** Searles/Vogel

**Vote:** 5-0-0-2 with Cien-Mayer and Chambers absent

**3. a. Field Usage/Groups utilizing fields that are not part of the Chula Vista Youth Sports Council – Verbal Report)**

Mr. Jack Griffin (Director of Public Works) informed the Commission that he was responding to a requested submitted by Commissioner Rios with respect to groups utilizing fields that are not part of the Chula Vista Youth Sports Council (YSC). Mr. Griffin noted that he was responding specifically to the issue of individuals that play football on Sundays on certain city fields. He also noted that these individuals have a web-site and post information as to where they are playing. The issue that Mr. Griffin was addressing is whether the City could prevent or restrict the usage of fields for football play by these individuals since they are not part of the YSC, and do not pay to the utilize the fields. Mr. Griffin stated that there isn't anything the City can do if these individuals are utilizing a field that is not allocated at the time they are using it. The Department has monitored their activities in terms of damage to the fields. Mr. Griffin again stated that the public has a right to utilize fields that are not assigned to structured groups. Park ordinance

currently does not exist which enables staff from preventing groups to utilize parks or fields that are open to the public.

Commissioner Rios commented that when Harborside Park was not part of the allocated field process, a group of individuals played sports on those fields, and City staff asked them not to play there. Commissioner Rios asked about the difference between the Harborside Park players and the football players that play on Sundays at various city fields.

Mr. Griffin responded that the city does not have an ordinance to dictate who can utilize a field if it is not allocated. He also commented and reiterated that if a city field is allocated through the YSC, and a different group is utilizing that field, then the unauthorized users do not have a right to use that field. He also noted, and for the record, that if a city field is not allocated to anyone or group, then it's open for public use.

Commissioner Rios restated that the group that was utilizing Harborside Park was utilizing it during the time that the park was not part of the allocation process.

Mr. Griffin responded that the group should never have been removed from the field. If someone is on a field that is not allocated, then that individual or individuals have a right to utilize that field.

Commissioner Searles asked for the purpose of allocating fields.

Mr. Griffin responded that the purpose was to have structure and that groups that are part of the YSC have the ability to use the fields for their structured games and practices.

Commissioner Searles inquired why a group is required to go through the City to utilize fields.

Mr. Ted Nelson (Recreation Specialist) responded that the YSC was developed so that coordination of the use-of-fields existed amongst youth groups that had structured games and practices. All the groups meet together and work out a schedule to meet their teams' needs. He further stated that if every team were to establish their own website, there would be chaos, as there would be no structure or coordination on which team is using which field on a specific date, etc.

Mr. Nelson further commented that the teams that are on the YSC have all approved the Field Management Plan. In addition, by doing this they have also partnered with the City and Park Rangers and monitor fields and facilities for staff. They report unauthorized field usage, field maintenance issues, facility damage, etc.

Commissioner Searles inquired as to what the YSC gets-out-of coordinating the fields.

Commissioner Rios responded that it keeps the groups from bickering amongst themselves for field usage.

Commissioner Searles responded that this is a good thing to get out of joining the YSC. He also commented that this issue would become larger with the growth of the city. He also noted that it's a good idea to inform park users/field users of the benefits of joining the YSC and working with the City. He further noted, that without this bit of knowledge,

staff will be faced dealing with unauthorized field users (although organized), utilizing fields outside of the allocation which will create conflict. He also informed the Commission that this situation is an opportunity to develop a solution and draw in potential partners/users into bringing them into the YSC or city.

Mr. Nelson informed the Commission that there are groups that do not wish to become part of the YSC because they would be held accountable to the high standards of the YSC (background checks, etc.).

Commissioner Scott commented that parks are in the community for the public to utilize and that staff shouldn't be put in a position to police park users if they are utilizing non-allocated fields. This is a free commodity the City provides to the public. In addition, noted that she concurs with Commissioner Searles' comments about working with groups.

Commissioner Rios noted that part of the frustration expressed by the YSC was that when fields were closed off and not available due to maintenance and/or resting, these other groups come in and utilize the fields. Therefore, there isn't any benefit to resting the fields because groups utilize the fields anyway. He noted that that City staff is diligent in working with the YSC in keeping the YSC groups off the fields for field maintenance and rest, but these football groups are utilizing the closed fields and tearing-up the fields.

Commissioner Searles concurs with Commissioner Scott's comments about keeping fields open for family use. He suggested that groups of certain size that want to utilize the fields for a game should be able to reserve a field (similar to picnic shelter reservation). That way patrons can be well informed of which fields are closed for resting/maintenance period, and which fields are available for use.

Commissioner Scott asked how the fields are rested.

Mr. Matt Little (Assistant Director of Public Works) stated that fields are rested through various options, such as snow fence across the damaged area, in other-words, staff makes it difficult for people to use the fields. He further noted that this particular football team in question was respectful when staff informed them that a field was in poor playing shape and could not be used and they moved immediately. Staff shuts down fields when they are in poor playing conditions, and make it inconvenient for park users to play on the field.

Commissioner Searles asked if there was a way for park patrons to go on-line and find out which fields are open for use.

Mr. Griffin responded that at this time that information was not available.

Discussion held on reservation system of park gazebos, park rangers posting reservation signs, and gazebos not reserved available for park patrons on a first-come-first serve basis.

Commissioner Vogel asked if this football group had been approached about joining the YSC.

Mr. Tom Class (Parks Manager) responded that staff had talked with the group and that the group had stated that they are not a "league" that they are a "team" of individuals

who gather and play football on Sundays. Mr. Class further noted that staff was made aware of this team because they played football in the rain last year, and tore up the field.

Mr. Little informed the Commission that staff would continue to monitor field conditions and that if a field is worn then that team would be moved elsewhere.

Commissioner Searles added that communicating with this team is essential instead of waiting for them to tear-up a field. He further suggested that he feels that staff should provide field usage information to them. Providing field-usage information in a user-friendly manner on the city's web-page is important. The information would include which fields are closed for repair, maintenance, etc and also indicate which field is available for use. Develop a process where it's not a disincentive to not join the YSC.

Commissioner Scott asked about park signage being posted.

Mr. Class responded that currently the parks do have park signs that state that no unauthorized play.

Mr. Griffin noted that the general public pays to build the parks and maintain the parks, and also noted that essentially every park but one is allocated for use. The Department is doing everything possible from the maintenance side to make every field available to the YSC for their use. Mr. Griffin further noted, that prohibiting day use to a group of individuals is something that city staff is not equipped to do and appreciates Commissioner Searles' comments about making field-use available on-line.

Commissioner Garza expressed that field usage discussion is a very important issue. He further noted that with the current financial state of the city, staff is doing a great job with the limited resources that are available to them. He also noted that staff is not in any way advocating that fields get closed-off to families for day use. Discussion held on youth groups that don't want to join the YSC because of the stringent rules that members have to abide by. He further explained that these rules are there for a good reason, and it would be a mistake if the YSC was disbanded or changed or do away with the philosophy of the YSC (background check on members, etc.). Also discussed was the fact that the adult football players would not be able to join the YSC because of the simple fact that they are adults, and therefore don't qualify to join the YSC.

Commissioner Garza also concurred with Commissioner Searles in that communication with this adult group is necessary and the continued monitoring of the fields after their use. Commissioner Garza also requested this item is placed on the agenda for next month for discussion and to include web-site information to include: allocation of fields, open fields & closed-fields.

4. **Unfinished Business – None**
5. **New Business – None**
6. **Written Communications – None**

## **7. Commission Comments**

Commissioner Vogel commended Mr. Buck Martin and staff for the Operation Splash event held at Parkway Pool on October 10, 2008.

Commissioner Rios welcomed Commissioner Scott's return and welcomed Commissioner Vogel to the Commission.

Commissioner Scott thanked everyone for approving her Leave-of-Absence, welcomed Commissioner Vogel, and congratulated Commissioner Garza for being selected Chair.

Commissioner Chair attended a joint meeting with Human Relations Commission and stated that a representative from SanDag attended that meeting and presented information on the changing Chula Vista demographics. In January 2008, Chula Vista population was 230K and stated that this number would increase to 316K by 2030. The growth is in the older-age group 40-year old and above. Power-point presentation will be e-mailed to the secretary.

## **8. Staff Comments –**

### **a. Recreation Monthly Report (Buck Martin)**

Mr. Martin apologized for being late to tonight's meeting and informed everyone that as he was attending a Board of Trustees meeting with the Nature Center. Mr. Martin thanked Commissioner Vogel for attending Operation Splash on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Martin also thanked Mr. Jack Griffin and his staff for all of their assistance with this event. Mr. Martin shared that Kaiser provided funding for next year as well.

Mr. Martin talked about the budget and the budget short-fall, and noted that donations were received by the Recreation Department to continue the Teen Dance and Dogeball at Loma Verde Center, and Haunted House at Otay Recreation Center. The monthly report was briefly reviewed.

Commissioner Garza asked about the status of the MOU Agreements between the City and SUHSD for field use.

Mr. Brian Cox (Principal Recreation Manager) responded that Joint-Use-Agreement between the City and SUHSD for use of Voyager Park has been renewed. Mr. Cox discussed an issue that was brought during discussion of the MOU was the request by SUHSD for the installation of additional fencing (\$25K) to protect their fine-arts building, and in-turn city programming would utilize the school's parking lot. Mr. Cox further noted that with the current fiscal situation with the City, the City would not be able to come-up with the requested \$25K and install the fencing as requested by the District. The parking access was removed from the agreement and therefore, Saturday use of the fields would be impacted.

Mr. Martin informed the Commission that a meeting is being held with SUHSD on Monday, 10/20 to discuss field accessibility. Information from this meeting will be relayed to the YSC via Ted Nelson.

- b. Public Works (Jack Griffin) - Shared with the Commission that American Golf submitted a request for fee increase and this request would be sent to Council for consideration. They recently advanced from Bronze to Silver level.

**9. Public Comments**

- a. Mark Twohey – Chula Vista resident and representing Elite Softball (travel team) thanked the department for Sunday use of the fields.
- b. Fernando Idiaquez – Chula Vista resident and member of the YSC, and representative of Bonita Valley Softball has concerns about field closures taking place in June, July and August 2009. Tournaments go on during this time, and would like to work with the City on the possibility of utilizing fields for this tournament.
- c. Ivan Loebe – Chula Vista Resident – addressed the Commission of with regards to disorderly conduct at Friendship Park. He informed the Commission that homeless individuals congregate at the park, get drunk, harass park user, throw things at each other, fight amongst each other, etc. He also indicated that he visited the City Manager's office on Monday 10/13 and that he was informed that someone would be in-touch with him with regards to his concern.

Mr. Martin responded that he would forward on the information to the appropriate office.

**10. Other**

**Motion for Adjournment to the regularly scheduled meeting of November 20, 2008.**